

St Mary's Church, Launton

Report to the Parish Meeting Thursday April 22nd. 2021.

2020 was, of course, dominated by the impact of Coronavirus. Although we had to suspend services in the church building with the first lockdown, the church itself has remained very much alive and active. During 2020 we:

- conducted services via Zoom every Sunday, (since returning to church we record and post services on YouTube for those unable to attend in person),
- delivered Sunday service packs to those unable to access services online,
- regularly delivered craft bags to families with children across Launton and the surrounding area,
- continued to conduct funerals,
- kept the church building open for private prayer on Sunday afternoons.

St Mary's PCC meetings continued on Zoom with our APCM being held in October rather than April as usual, and the business of looking after the church and the churchyard continued. For example, the yew trees in the churchyard have been trimmed, the clock has had a repair so it now works again and we held a churchyard clear up day at the beginning of November. Many thanks to all who have contributed to keeping the church going.

We approved our Safeguarding policy in Autumn of 2019 and through 2020 continued to give this crucial area careful attention. Safeguarding features on every PCC agenda.

With no services and only one wedding our income suffered and like many charities we faced a very difficult financial year. Fundraising was a challenge with Lockdown restrictions but as well as a successful appeal letter we managed to organise a Cake Stall and Produce Stall outside the Parish Hall, a Scarecrow Trail and a Christmas Windows event. It is important to say a massive thank you to all who either helped with the organisation, or donated funds. Many in the community certainly seemed to enjoy the walks around the village and eating home-made produce! Lots of people supported these events and so again our huge thanks to all of you.

The PCC have been working on the Lease of the Parish Hall and we are hopeful that the legal documents will soon be signed. More information on this in other reports.

We have been very fortunate to have a hard working PCC and our thanks to them and all in the church family who take care of St Mary's, but a very special thank you to our two church wardens, Joan Packer and Celia Manderson, for the tireless and dedicated time and energy they have put in over the last year.

We are now having services in church following government and diocesan guidelines, and Rev Peter has designed a pattern of services across the three villages of Launton, Bucknell and Caversfield. St Mary's Family Service is still on Zoom on the first Sunday of the month and we are fortunate that we have a wonderful Family Service team to help with the planning of these.

We are now looking forward to improving times and hope 2021 continues to be a year of opening up for our Church with fewer restrictions for us all. St Mary's continues to be at the heart of the Launton life, and we have great hopes and plans for developing our services and continuing development of our engagement with the community.